

MARKETING MIX STRATEGIES AND MARKETING EFFICIENCY OF WOMEN SELF HELP GROUPS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of marketing mix strategies on the marketing efficiency of Women Self-Help Groups (WSHGs) in Thiruvallur District. Although WSHGs play a vital role in promoting rural development and women empowerment, they continue to face significant challenges in effectively marketing their products. Drawing on the marketing mix (4Ps) framework, supported by the Resource-Based View and social entrepreneurship perspective, the study examines how product, price, promotion, and place strategies impact marketing efficiency. A quantitative research design is adopted, and primary data were collected from 300 WSHG members using a structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed using SPSS for statistical analysis (descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression) and Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test the proposed relationships. The findings show that promotion, price, and place significantly and positively influence marketing efficiency, with promotion being the strongest factor. Product strategy, however, does not have a significant effect, indicating limited innovation and differentiation among WSHG products. The model explains a substantial level of variance, confirming strong predictive capability. The study contributes to existing literature by offering region-specific insights and extending marketing theories to grassroots enterprises. It highlights the need for WSHGs to adopt market-oriented approaches by strengthening promotion, pricing, and distribution strategies. Policy recommendations stress the importance of training programs, digital marketing adoption, and institutional support for long-term sustainability.

Keywords: Women Self-Help Groups, Marketing Mix, Rural Entrepreneurship, Pricing Strategy, Promotional Activities

1. Introduction

The appearance of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) is bringing remarkable changes among their members particularly in rural areas of India and they are encouraging rural people to start some kind of economic activities for improving their livelihoods (Shekhar 2024). These economic activities carried out by members of SHGs enable them to produce and market variety of products by utilizing available local resources by which they want to enhance their economic and social conditions (Panda et al. 2025). The core action of SHGs is to improve competencies of their members and generate income through entrepreneurial activities and employment that promote economic activities in local areas (Al-Kubati and Selvaratnam 2023). Besides, they are highly and significantly contributing to development of rural areas and empowerment of women considerably (BHATT and KALKHUNDIYA 2025).

Women SHGs (WSHGs) are established as a commanding power for empowerment of women and development of entrepreneurship particularly in rural areas of India (Tripathi, Chaudhary, et al. 2025). They are giving a space for women for coming together, combine their resources and involve in different income generating activities mainly production and sale of products (Agrawal and Agrawal 2025). Women members are acquiring financial independence, improving their competencies and contributing to development of their families and communities through active participation (Tripathi, Mishra, et al. 2025). Besides, WSHGs are gaining noteworthy drive in recent years as a way for economically empowering women especially for economically weaker sections and deprived areas (S. Srivastava et al. 2024). Though WSHGs are playing a significant role in improving economic conditions of their members and bringing them in to decent and secured life, they still are struggling to market their products across different markets efficiently (Murugan and Sreedaya 2024). The actual and very important problem faced by WSHGs is marketing not production of products (Rajpal and Tamang 2023). Hence, efficient marketing mix strategies are playing a critical role in successful operation and sustainability of marketing of products of WSHGs and are highly important for their marketing efficiency and they are also transforming them from survival to profitable enterprises. WSHGs are using marketing mix strategies effectively for dealing their competitors and maximizing their profits.

Furthermore, WSHGs are producing variety of products by utilizing local resources and they are concentrating mainly on needs of local people and selling value added products. They are also adopting cost effective pricing and reducing market intermediaries and their pricing are promoting their financial independence. Besides, they are selling products through rural and weekly markets directly to consumers building trust and loyalty with local communities and they are also branding their products for efficient marketing. An effective adoption of 4Ps is enabling economic empowerment, growth of entrepreneurial activities and improving their marketing decision among members of WSHGs. And 4Ps are also directly influencing efficiency of marketing and profit of WSHGs especially in India by increasing happiness of consumers and access to market and they are also improving packaging, pricing and better distribution facilitates them to face competition and attain their sustainability.

In the existing situation, marketing mix strategies are playing an important role in enhancing marketing efficiency of WSHGs. But, there is no study is done relating to marketing mix strategies and marketing efficiency of WSHGs in different districts of Tamil Nadu state of India. The present research is made to fill this gap with an emphasis on WSHGs in Thiruvallur District in Tamil Nadu state of India. The uniqueness of this study is in its integrated approach that links marketing mix strategies and marketing efficiency of WSHGs. The outcome of this study help WSHGs to revisit current marketing mix strategies to increase their marketing efficiency for their products. Therefore, this study is conducted amongst women SHG members particularly in Thiruvallur District in Tamil Nadu state of India as it is one among the important district for WSHGs in Tamil Nadu in India with the following objective of influence of marketing mix strategies on marketing efficiency of women SHGs.

1.1 Research Significance : The study is important because it examine how the marketing mix strategies can impact the marketing effectiveness of Women Self-Help Groups (WSHGs), which are essential in rural development and empowering women. WSHGs have been struggling with the marketing of their products effectively despite their contributions to the generation of income. The study offers practical information by concentrating on the promotion, pricing and distribution strategies to improve their performance in the market. It also assists policymakers and development agencies in formulating specific interventions to enhance sustainability and competitiveness of WSHGs.

1.2 Research Gap : Although the literature on Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in terms of financial inclusion and women empowerment is vast, little emphasis has been put on their marketing effectiveness (B. Srivastava et al. 2025). The available literature is largely focused on socio-economic performance and overall performance with little consideration of systematic marketing strategies (Yevdokimov et al. 2022). In addition, very little is known about the application of the marketing mix (4Ps) framework in the context of Women Self-Help Groups (WSHGs). There is also lack of any empirical studies that are region specific, especially in Thiruvallur District of Tamil Nadu. Therefore, this research intends to address this gap by examining the impact of marketing mix strategies on marketing efficiency of WSHGs.

1.3 Research questions

1. How does product strategy influence the marketing efficiency of Women Self-Help Groups (WSHGs)?
2. What is the effect of pricing strategy on the marketing efficiency of WSHGs?
3. How do promotional activities impact the marketing efficiency of WSHGs?
4. What is the role of distribution (place) strategy in improving the marketing efficiency of WSHGs?

1.4 Research Objectives

- To examine the impact of product strategy on marketing efficiency of WSHGs
- To analyze the influence of pricing strategy on marketing efficiency
- To evaluate the role of promotional activities in enhancing marketing efficiency
- To assess the effect of distribution (place) strategy on marketing efficiency
- To provide suggestions for improving marketing performance of WSHGs

1.5 Rest of the section : The remainder of the section is organized in the following way: Section 2 contain the theoretical framework and literature review. Section 3 describes the research methodology. Section 4 discusses data analysis and results. Section 5 discusses implications, conclusions and limitations, and ends with limitations and future research directions.

2 Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework: The current research is based on multi-theoretical approach to describe the effects of using marketing mix strategies on marketing performance of WSHGs. In particular, the framework combines Marketing Mix Theory (4Ps), the Resource-Based View (RBV), and Social Entrepreneurship Theory to offer a broad insight into the marketing behavior of the resource-constrained, community-based enterprises.

2.1.1 Marketing Mix Theory (4Ps)

This research is based on the classical marketing mix framework that was invented by Jerome McCarthy, whereby Product, Price, Promotion, and Place are the main factors that determine the marketing performance. According to this theory, proper coordination of these four elements help organizations address the needs of customers and gain competitive advantage. The 4Ps framework is specifically applicable in the situation with WSHGs since these organizations act within local and highly competitive informal markets. Each of the components has its role: Product – quality, design, and uniqueness in the locally produced goods; Price determines the affordability and competitiveness in price-sensitive markets; Promotion increases the level of awareness using cost-effective communication mediums; and Place guarantees access by way of local and direct distribution networks. Therefore, the 4Ps framework offers the structural framework on which the impact of marketing strategies on marketing efficiency is analyzed, which forms the basis of the H1–H4 hypotheses.

2.1.2 RBV

The RBV, proposed by Jay Barney is the explanation on the contribution of internal resources and capabilities to sustainable competitive advantage. RBV asserts that the effective use of value, rarity, inimitable and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources enable organizations to attain better performance. In the case of WSHGs, they are skills and craftsmanship of the natives, social capital and social cohesion, local expertise and trust in the community, and low-cost production capabilities. Marketing mix strategies are a set of mechanisms that can convert these internal resources into marketable products. Indicatively, unique product design (Product), low-cost pricing (Price), trust based promotion (Promotion) and local distribution networks (Place) could be considered as application of internal capabilities to increase marketing efficiency. Therefore, RBV goes in line with the argument that the success of marketing mix strategies is based on the ability of WSHGs to use their internal strengths.

2.1.3 Social Entrepreneurship Theory

The theory of Social Entrepreneurship underlines the two-fold purpose of economic sustainability and social impact, as pointed out by Gregory Dees. WSHGs are social enterprises that do not just make money, but also empower women and enhance the welfare of the community. In this context, marketing strategies are not just profit-driven but also trust-driven, promotion depends on community relationship and word-of-mouth, pricing can be inclusive and affordable, and distribution emphasizes access in rural society

2.2 Literature Review

Secondary data and measures of growth rates have been extensively used to analyse the growth and performance of SHGs in India as they are seen to play a major role in empowering women in India. Research shows that SHGs positively impact the economic, social, and financial status of women by increasing access to credit, developing entrepreneurial abilities, and promoting decision-making, as well as determining the major challenges to their efficiency (RAO 2024). Both primary and secondary data in research on marketing practices of women SHGs in rural India deals with product promotion and outreach of SHGs-bank linkage programs that classify SHGs into low, medium and high performance groups under Principal Component Analysis (PCA) which reveals differences in marketing performance (D. Dev and Saha 2025). More research points at SHGs as significant agents of socio-economic change, which fosters economic autonomy, social unity, and sustainable community growth and the necessity to tackle the operational issues (Kumar and Kumar 2024). Moreover, SHGs are important in promoting environmentally friendly products, in the rural areas, and empowering women, but they need capacity-building and policy support to enhance their effectiveness (Ghosh 2025).

The study of the financial performance in the areas like Andhra Pradesh demonstrates that SHGs are grassroots institutions that facilitate the community development and sustainability by taking part in the participatory strategies (Haritha et al. 2025). Quantitative research also indicates that SHGs play a big role in ensuring financial inclusion and self-employment, yet challenges like inaccessibility to markets, poor technology uptake and financial limitations remain (Reddy 2026). Furthermore, empirical evidence shows that social and economic empowerment are closely related and enhance each other positively in the overall empowerment of women (Santhosh Kumar and Aithal 2024). Training programs have also been identified as a key factor enhancing SHG performance by improving skills, confidence, and financial independence (M. D. Dev and Saha 2024). Financial inclusion is a key factor that determines SHG sustainability, and their long-term effectiveness depends on loan recovery, savings behavior, and institutional linkages despite the persistent challenges (Kumari and Saheb 2024).

2.3 Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework of this research is aimed at addressing how marketing mix strategies affect the marketing performance of WSHGs. It is based on the classic 4P marketing mix model that is reinforced by the RBV and social entrepreneur theory that explains the presence of internal capabilities and strategic marketing choices to improve organizational performance. This model assumes that marketing mix strategies are independent variables, which are based on four major dimensions, namely, Product, Price, Promotion and Place, whereas marketing efficiency is the dependent variable. The framework suggests that the successful application of these marketing mix elements can go a long way in enhancing the capacity of WSHGs to efficiently sell their products in competitive and resource-bound situations.

2.3.1 Independent Variables: Marketing Mix Strategies (4Ps)

2.3.1.1 Product (H1)

Product is the quality, design, packaging and variety of goods manufactured by WSHGs. Traditional knowledge and skills are reflected in the locally sourced and handmade products which the rural enterprises provide. An effective product strategy should lead to customer satisfaction and value, which add to marketing efficiency.

H1: Product is positively influencing marketing efficiency of women SHGs.

2.3.1.2 Price (H2)

Price is the financial worth attached to products, and pricing schemes, such as affordability, competitive pricing, and cost-based pricing. Low-cost pricing is generally being embraced by WSHGs owing to the low cost of production and the lack of intermediaries. The right pricing strategies also be able to appeal to consumers of rural and semi urban areas who are sensitive to pricing thus enhancing the sales output and efficiency.

H2: Price is positively influencing marketing efficiency of women SHGs.

2.3.1.3 Promotion (H3)

Promotion encompasses all the communication tools employed to inform and convince the customers which include; word-of-mouth, local exhibitions, social media and community based marketing. Promotional activities play a vital role in WSHGs because the brand recognition is poor. Proper promotion create awareness, customer loyalty and confidence, which plays a crucial role in marketing effectiveness.

H3: Promotion is positively influencing marketing efficiency of women SHGs.

Place (H4)

Promotion encompasses all the communication tools employed to inform and convince the customers which include; word-of-mouth, local exhibitions, social media and community based marketing. Promotional activities play a vital role in WSHGs because the brand recognition is poor. Proper promotion create awareness, customer loyalty and confidence, which plays a crucial role in marketing effectiveness.

H4: Place is positively influencing marketing efficiency of women SHGs.

2.3.2 Dependent Variable: Marketing Efficiency

Marketing efficiency defines the capacity of WSHGs to streamline their marketing activities in cost, reach, sales performance and customer satisfaction. It indicates the efficiency of SHGs in utilizing the little they have to give optimum output in the marketing processes. Increased marketing efficiency means that the marketing strategies are more aligned with the market demand leading to increased financial performance and sustainability.

As part of the marketing mix, the framework assumes that every aspect of the marketing mix has a direct and indirect impact on marketing efficiency. Although all the four elements should positively affect it, their levels of influence can differ, depending on the circumstances of the operations of the WSHGs.

3. Research Methodology: The methodology of the research be quantitative and cross-sectional design to study the effectiveness of marketing mix strategies to determine the marketing efficiency of Women Self-Help Groups in Thiruvallur District. A structured questionnaire was used to gather primary data of 300 respondents. Simply random sampling was employed to make it representative. To test the hypotheses and prove the existing relationships between the variables, the data were analyzed using SPSS to perform descriptive statistics, correlation and regression, and SmartPLS to perform Structural Equation Modeling.

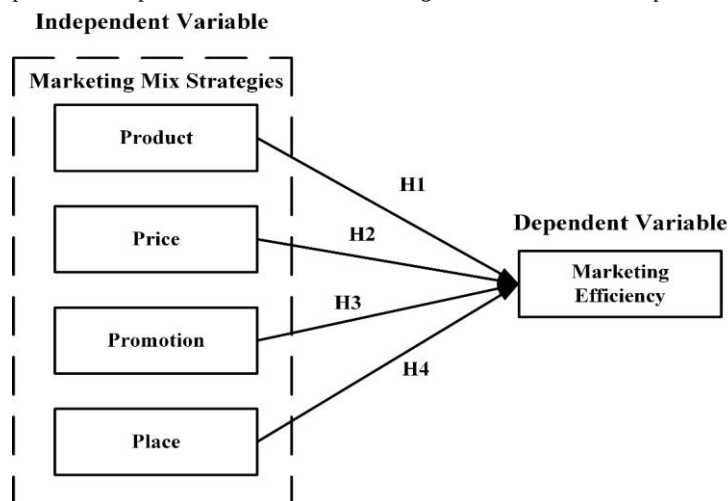


Figure 1 Marketing Mix and Efficiency Model

Figure 1 shows the effect of marketing mix strategies on marketing efficiency of Women Self-Help Groups. The independent variables that include product, price, promotion and place are the variables that are hypothesized to influence the dependent variable, which is marketing efficiency. The components are interconnected with the help of hypotheses (H1–H4), which means that each of the components is directly related to another one and the overall impact on the performance outcomes.

3.1 Research Design

The current research is based on the quantitative, cross-sectional research design to test the impact of marketing mix strategies on marketing efficiency of WSHGs. To identify the perceptions of SHG members about marketing practices, as well as to test the hypotheses (H1-H4) proposed empirically, the descriptive and analytical approach is used. The research is based on primary data that was gathered using a structured survey instrument. It is illustrated in figure 2

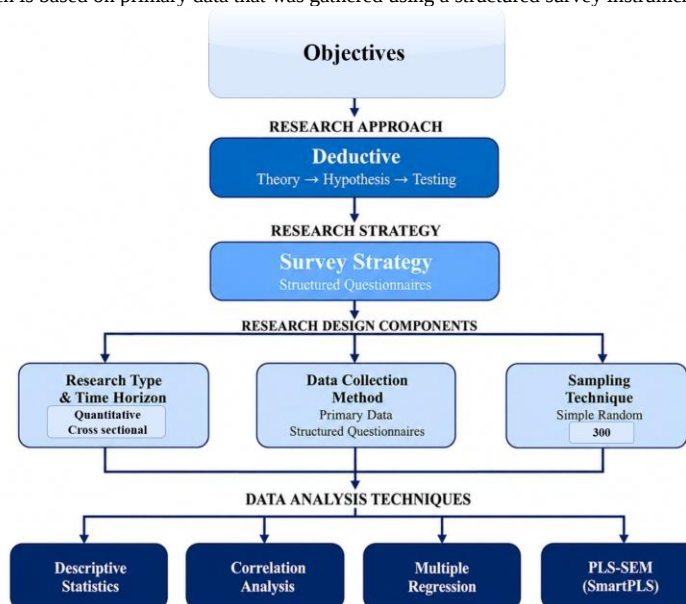


Figure 2. Research Design Framework

3.2 Study Area: The empirical study is carried out within the Thiruvallur District based in the state of Tamil Nadu. The district is chosen because it has high number of active women SHGs who are involved in different income generating activities like handicrafts, food processing and small scale production. The area is a suitable setting to discuss marketing issues and effectiveness within businesses operating on grassroots level.

3.3 Population and Sampling: The target population of this study consists of all Women Self-Help Group (WSHG) members in Thiruvallur District who are actively engaged in production and marketing activities. A simple random sampling technique was adopted to ensure that every SHG member had an equal chance of selection, thereby reducing selection bias and improving sample representativeness. In total, 900 questionnaires were distributed among SHG members, out of which 300 fully completed responses were received, resulting in a response rate of 33.33%. The sample size is considered adequate for multivariate analysis, as a sample size above 200 is generally sufficient for regression-based studies and ensures statistical reliability.

3.4 Data Collection Method: The primary data for this study were collected through a structured questionnaire developed specifically for this research. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A captured the demographic details of the respondents, including age, education, income, marital status, and family type. Section B measured the key constructs of the study, namely Product, Price, Promotion, Place, and Marketing Efficiency. Data collection was carried out through direct interaction with Women Self-Help Group members to ensure clarity of questions and to obtain accurate and complete responses.

3.5 Measurement of Variables

The research quantifies five constructs; Product, Price, Promotion, Place, and Marketing Efficiency. Each construct is operationalized with multiple items modified and optimized based on previous literature and customized to SHGs. The scale is on a five-point liker scale i.e. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. This scaling methodology allows quantifying the perceptions of respondents, and it is well-used in behavioral and social science studies.

Table 1. Methodology overview of quantitative research framework

Parameter	Details
Research Design	Quantitative, cross-sectional survey design
Study Area	Thiruvallur District, Tamil Nadu, India
Target Population	Active Women SHG members engaged in production and marketing activities
Sampling Technique	Simple Random Sampling to ensure representativeness
Questionnaires Issued	900
Valid Responses	300 (Response Rate: 33.33%)
Data Collection	Structured questionnaire with direct member interaction for accuracy
Measurement Scale	5-Point Likert Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)
Constructs Measured	Product, Price, Promotion, Place (Independent); Marketing Efficiency (Dependent)
Analysis Tools	SPSS 26 (Descriptive Statistics, Correlation, Regression); SmartPLS 4.0 (PLS-SEM)

Table 1 adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey design in Thiruvallur District, Tamil Nadu, targeting active Women SHG members involved in production and marketing activities. Using simple random sampling, 900 questionnaires were distributed, yielding 300 valid responses. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS 26 and SmartPLS 4.0.

4 Data Analysis and Interpretation: The data presented in this section include the analysis and interpretation of data collected in Thiruvallur District among 300 Women Self-Help Group. It uses such statistical tools as descriptive statistics, correlation, regression, and Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The analysis explores some of the relationships among marketing mix strategies and marketing efficiency. The results are interpreted to determine the important factors that lead to efficiency and ultimately provide insights into how WSHGs can enhance their marketing performance and overall sustainability.

4.1 Profile of Women SHG Members: The study sample of 300 WSHG members is socio-economic representative across Thiruvallur District. The age group of 36 to 45 years is the dominant age group (32.67%) indicating mature entrepreneurial participation. The education level of the respondents shows that primary education (38%) is the most common and 65% of the people earn less than ₹15,000 per month which is the level where WSHGs play a pivotal role in augmenting the family income of lower income groups. Table 2, which gives the demographic profile of respondents, gives valuable information on the socio-economic setting of women who are involved in SHGs.

Table 2. Profile of Women SHG Members (n=300)

Profile	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	Less than 25 Years	68	22.67
	26 – 35 Years	81	27.00
	36 – 45 Years	98	32.67
	More than 45 Years	53	17.66
Education	Illiterate	77	25.67
	Primary	114	38.00
	Middle	71	23.67
Monthly Family Income	Secondary	38	12.66
	Below ₹10,000	104	34.67
	₹10,001 – ₹15,000	91	30.33
	₹15,001 – ₹20,000	65	21.67
Marital Status	Above ₹20,000	40	13.33
	Married	251	83.67
Family Type	Unmarried	49	16.33
	Joint	113	37.67
	Nuclear	187	62.33

Most of the respondents (32.67%) are aged 36-45 years, which means that middle-aged women are active members of SHGs. The level of literacy is moderate, with a large percentage (38.00%) having primary-level education. The majority of the respondents (34.67%) are in low-income families with earnings that are less than 10,000 per month. Moreover, most of them are married (83.67%) and cohabit in nuclear families (62.33%), which implies that SHGs are significant in helping to sustain household income and financial stability. It is also illustrated in figure 3

Respondent Profile Overview (n = 300)

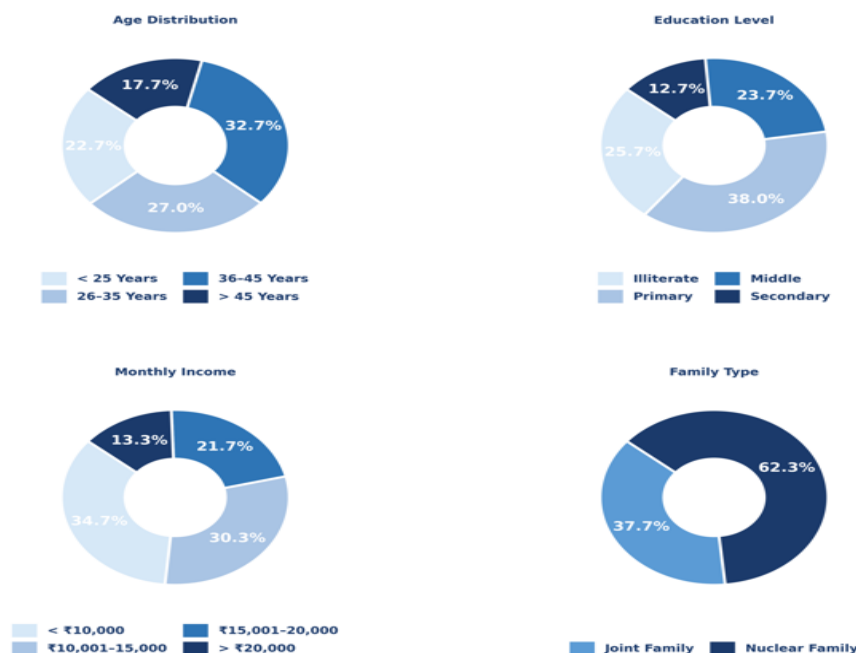


Figure 3. WSHG Respondent Demographic Profiles

4.2 Reliability and Validity of Constructs

Reliability and validity tests were carried out to ensure accuracy of measurements for all five constructs. The measurement model was then tested for its robustness by calculating and evaluating the following psychometric values: Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Discriminant Validity (DV). In Table 3, reliability and validity tests were carried out to achieve accuracy in measurements.

Table 3. Reliability and Validity

Measures	CR	AVE	DV
Product	0.74	0.65	0.67
Price	0.75	0.63	0.65
Promotion	0.73	0.62	0.64
Place	0.72	0.66	0.69
Marketing Efficiency	0.77	0.68	0.70

Composite Reliability values of all constructs are above the recommended value of 0.70, which supports internal consistency. The AVE values are more than 0.50, which refers to acceptable convergent validity. The values of discriminant validity are also greater than 0.60 and this proves that the constructs are not the same. Therefore, the measurement model can be considered reliable and valid to be further analyzed.

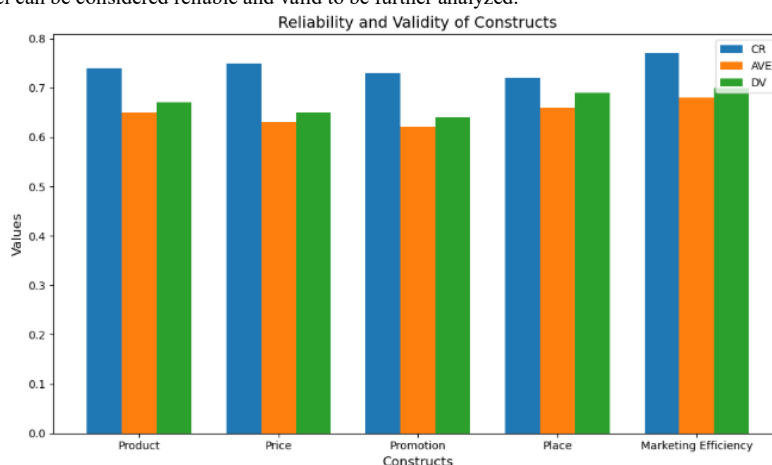


Figure 4 Reliability and Validity Analysis of Constructs

The figure 4 shows the relative values of Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Discriminant Validity (DV) of all constructs. All the values are above recommended values, which confirm internal consistency, convergent validity and discriminant validity. This means that the measurement model is valid and can be further statistically analyzed and tested.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis: The average scores are used to show that the respondents tend to support the statements concerning marketing mix strategies and marketing efficiency. Marketing efficiency has the greatest mean (3.86) of all variables, which indicates positive perception. The results of correlation show that all the independent variables are positive in correlation to marketing efficiency. Promotion has the best relationship ($r = 0.53$), then place ($r = 0.45$) and price ($r = 0.42$). All correlation coefficients are lower than 0.80, which means that there is no multicollinearity problem. (Table 4).

Table 4. Mean, SD and Coefficients of Correlation

Measures	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Product	3.71	0.41	1				
2. Price	3.75	0.36	0.43**	1			
3. Promotion	3.78	0.32	0.36**	0.38**	1		
4. Place	3.73	0.39	0.26**	0.29**	0.40**	1	
5. Marketing Efficiency	3.86	0.25	0.39**	0.42**	0.53**	0.45**	1

$p < 0.01$

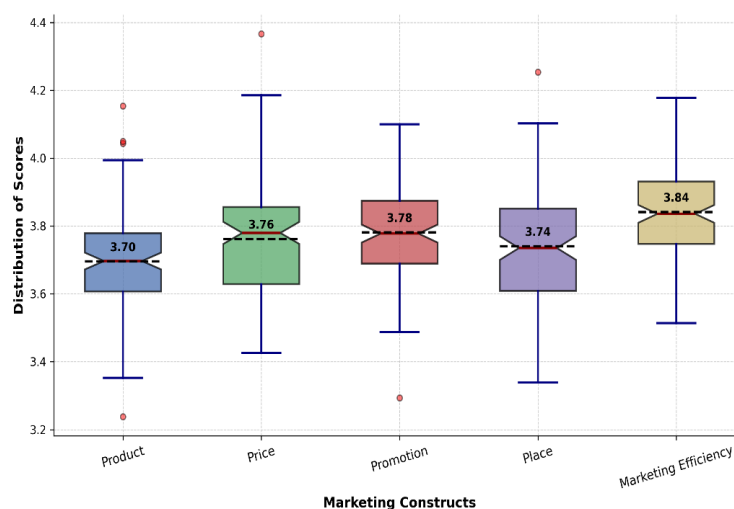


Figure 5 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis Results

The figure 5 shows mean values and correlation between variables. Marketing efficiency exhibits the greatest mean, which shows effective respondent endorsement. The outcomes of correlation indicate that there are positive correlations between all variables with the strongest correlation being between promotion and other variables. Low correlation values confirm that there is indeed no multicollinearity between the variables and as a result, one can conduct further regression and structural equation modeling analysis.

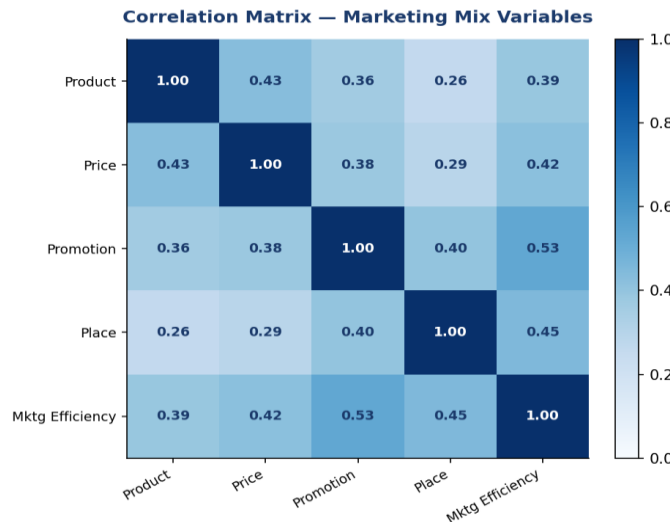


Figure 6 correlation matrix among marketing mix

Figure 6 presents the correlation matrix among marketing mix variables and marketing efficiency. All variables are correlated with each other and the highest value of correlation was found between promotion and marketing efficiency ($r = 0.53$). The correlation values do not exceed 0.80 which indicates that there is no multicollinearity in the data and there is adequate scope for further regression and SEM analysis.

4.4 Multiple Regression Analysis: Multiple regression analysis was performed to quantify the individual contribution of each marketing mix element — Product, Price, Promotion, and Place — on marketing efficiency. The analysis examines standardised beta coefficients, t-values, and significance levels to empirically test the directional influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable. Table 5 & 6 presents the results of multiple regression analysis to test the effects of marketing mix strategies on marketing efficiency.

Table 5. Outcomes of Regression Analysis

Variable	β	t-Value	p-Value	Effect Size	Significance	Decision
Constant	1.465	12.510	0.000	—	—	—
Product	0.087	1.625	0.105	Small	Not Significant	H1 Rejected
Price	0.298	4.029	0.000	Medium	Significant	H2 Supported
Promotion	0.428	9.147	0.000	Large	Significant	H3 Supported
Place	0.176	4.053	0.000	Small	Significant	H4 Supported

Regression Coefficients: Impact on Marketing Efficiency
(* $p < 0.01$ | ns = not significant)

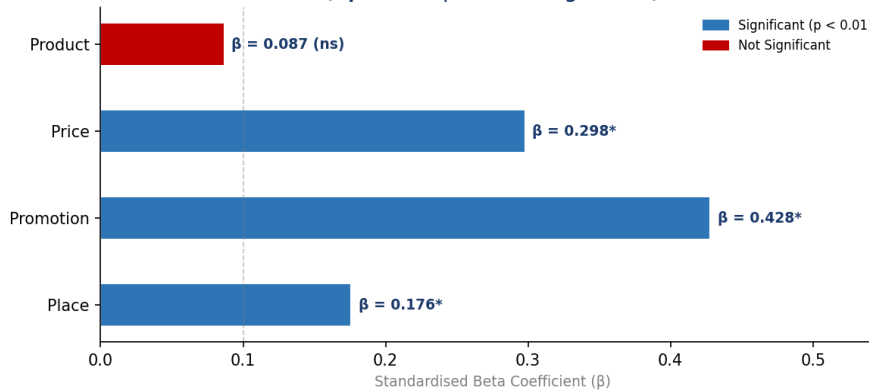


Figure 7. Regression Impact on Marketing Efficiency

The figure 7 displays regression coefficients that can be interpreted as the effect of marketing mix variables on marketing efficiency. The promotion variable has the highest significant impact ($\beta = 0.428$), followed by the price variable ($\beta = 0.298$) and the place variable ($\beta = 0.176$). There is no significant difference between the products and no important contribution to the efficiency of the marketing.

Table 6 Model Summary of Regression Analysis for Marketing Efficiency

Model Summary	Value
R^2	0.52
Adjusted R^2	0.51
F-value	35.454 ($p < 0.01$)

The regression equation is statistically significant ($F = 35.454$, $p < 0.01$) which means that the combination of independent variables can predict changes in marketing efficiency. This model has the ability to explain 52% of marketing efficiency variance ($R^2 = 0.52$) which is high by social science research standards. The greatest positive impact is on promotion ($\beta = 0.428$), which illustrates the significance of communication and awareness tactics. Price ($\beta = 0.298$) has a significant influence on the marketing efficiency which implies the influence of affordability. Place ($\beta = 0.176$) also has a positive effect, with its focus on distribution effectiveness. The product ($\beta = 0.087$) is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$), which implies that the factors of product alone cannot profoundly impact the marketing efficiency in this situation.

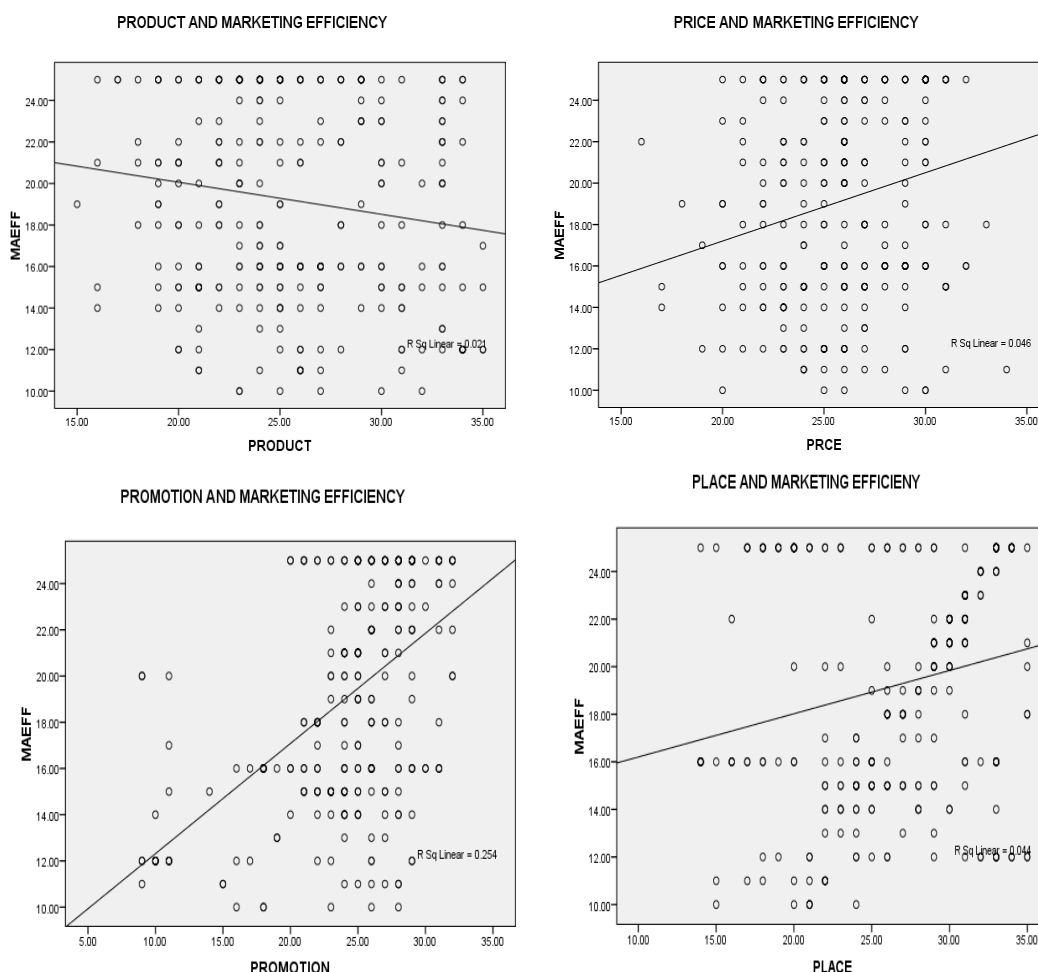


Figure 8 Marketing Mix Strategies and Marketing Efficiency Relationships

Figure 8 show that the most significant factor is promotion, which implies that awareness, communication, and customer interactions are essential to WSHGs. Price and place are also important factors, as they speak of the significance of accessibility and affordability of prices in the rural market. Nevertheless, the non-significant influence of product implies that WSHGs might be not differentiated or innovative in terms of the offered products, limiting their ability to affect the effectiveness of marketing.

4.5 Hypothesis-wise Analysis

The study results also validate the fact that marketing mix strategies have a significant impact on the marketing efficiency of the Women Self-Help Groups. Product strategy is moderately positively related, implying the significance of product quality and innovation. Pricing strategy makes customer demand and sales performance better by providing affordable and competitive price. Promotional activities showed the highest impact on marketing efficiency on improving awareness, trust and customer engagement. Place strategy also has positive impact on efficiency in terms of distribution and market accessibility. The results suggest that the integration of product, price, promotion and place can significantly enhance the performance and sustainability of Women Self-help Groups.

H1 : Product strategy has a positive influence on the marketing efficiency of Women Self-Help Groups.

The hypothesis is based on the assumption that product strategy has a positive impact on the marketing efficiency, and therefore, better product quality, innovation, and differentiation result in better sales performance, customer satisfaction, and overall effectiveness of WSHGs.

Table 7. Correlation between Product and Marketing Efficiency

Variables	Product	Marketing Efficiency
Product	1	0.39**
Marketing Efficiency	0.39**	1

The positive correlation analysis indicates that there is a positive relationship between product strategy and marketing efficiency ($r = 0.39$, $p < 0.01$). It means that modifications in product-related aspects moderately increase the marketing efficiency. Nonetheless, the correlation is not high, which implies that product differentiation has little effects on overall marketing outcomes of WSHGs.

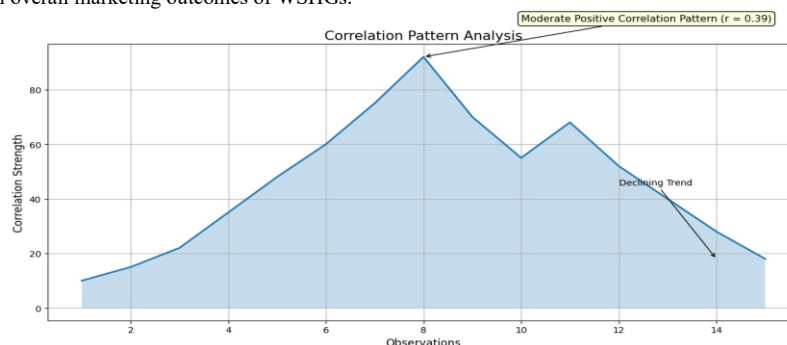


Figure 9 Product Strategy and Marketing Efficiency Relationship

The figure 9 shows the relationship between product strategy and marketing efficiency. There is a moderate positive correlation, which means that the increase in the quality of products and the design of products influences the marketing performance. Nevertheless, the comparatively low value of the correlation indicates the relative weak impact that product differentiation has on WSHGs, which implies that stronger innovation and branding strategies are necessary within the WSHGs.

Table. 8 Descriptive Statistics for Product

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Product	3.71	0.41

Table 8 illustrates the means of the product strategy are 3.71 with a standard deviation of 0.41, as indicated by the descriptive statistics. This indicates that respondents tend to be on the same page about the effectiveness of practices that relate to products. But, moderate variation is a sign of inconsistency in the quality, design, or innovation of products among the various Women Self-Help Groups.

Interpretation

The findings suggest that there is a moderate positive correlation between product strategy and marketing efficiency. Nonetheless, the impact is not substantial, which implies a lack of product differentiation and a reduced ability to affect the overall performance of WSHGs.

H2: Pricing strategy has a significant positive influence on the marketing efficiency of Women Self-Help

This hypothesis supposes that, pricing strategy is one of the variables that significantly affect the marketing efficiency; that is, cheaper and competitive pricing has a significant positive impact on marketing efficiency.

Table. 9 Correlation between Price and Marketing Efficiency

Variables	Price	Marketing Efficiency
Price	1	0.42**
Marketing Efficiency	0.42**	1

Table 9 reveal a positive and significant relationship between pricing strategy and marketing efficiency ($r = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that effective pricing practices, such as affordability and competitiveness, contribute to improved marketing outcomes and play an important role in influencing consumer purchasing behavior.

Table 10. Descriptive Statistics for Pricing Strategy

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Price	3.75	0.36

The table 10 show that pricing strategy has a mean value of 3.75 and a standard deviation of 0.36. This indicates that respondents generally perceive pricing practices as effective. The relatively low variation suggests consistency in pricing strategies adopted by Women Self-Help Groups across the study area.

Table 11. Regression for Pricing Strategy

Variable	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig.
Price	0.298	4.029	0.000

Table 11 indicates that pricing strategy has a significant positive effect on marketing efficiency ($\beta = 0.298$, $p < 0.01$). This confirms that pricing plays a crucial role in influencing marketing performance. Affordable and competitive pricing strategies enhance sales outcomes and improve overall efficiency of Women Self-Help Groups.

Impact of Pricing Strategy on Marketing Efficiency

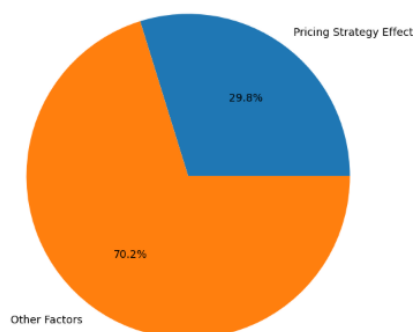


Figure 10 Pricing Strategy Impact on Marketing Efficiency

Figure 10 demonstrates how pricing strategy is contributing to marketing efficiency. Pricing contributes to a significant percentage of influence meaning that it significantly contributes to performance improvement. These findings substantiate the hypothesis that competitive and low costs promote better sales results. Yet there are other factors which play an equally significant role, which implies that there be a combined effect of various marketing strategies.

Interpretation : The results indicate that pricing strategy positively affects marketing efficiency with a significant positive influence. Competitive pricing that is affordable enhances customer demand, sales performance, as well as overall efficiency of WSHGs.

H3: Promotional activities have a significant positive influence on the marketing efficiency of Women Self-Help Groups.

The hypothesis is that promotional activities significantly positively affect marketing efficiency, indicating that greater visibility, trust, and overall performance of WSHGs are achieved through improved communication, awareness, and customer engagement.

Table 12. Correlation between Promotion and Marketing Efficiency

Variables	Promotion	Marketing Efficiency
Promotion	1	0.53**
Marketing Efficiency	0.53**	1

Correlation analysis indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between promotion and marketing efficiency ($r = 0.53$, $p < 0.01$). This means that promotions have a great impact on marketing performance. Strategies of communicating effectively, creating awareness, and building trust can help a lot in enhancing the market penetration of the WSHGs.

Table 13 Descriptive Statistics for Promotion

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Promotion	3.78	0.32

Descriptive statistics indicates that the mean score of promotion is 3.78 with a standard deviation of 0.32. This implies that there is a great deal of consensus between the respondents as to the effectiveness of promotions. The small variation indicates that promotional activities are always exercised within Women Self-Help Groups within the study area.

Interpretation

The correlation analysis indicates that there is a strong positive correlation between promotion and marketing efficiency. Awareness, customer engagement and trust are greatly enhanced by effective promotional activities, which makes promotion the most influential variable in the performance of the WSHGs.

H4 : Place strategy has a positive influence on the marketing efficiency of Women Self-Help Groups.

This hypothesis suggests that place strategy positively impacts on marketing efficiency which implies that effective distribution channels and better market access have a positive effect on sales performance and reach of WSHGs.

Table 14. Correlation between Place and Marketing Efficiency

Variables	Place	Marketing Efficiency
Place	1	0.45**
Marketing Efficiency	0.45**	1

The table 14 show that there exists a moderate positive relationship between the place strategy and the marketing efficiency ($r = 0.45$, $p = 0.01$). This indicates that effective distribution channels to increase accessibility and availability of products would lead to improved marketing results and customer reach by Women Self-Help Groups.

Table 15. Descriptive Statistics of Place Strategy

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Place	3.73	0.39

Table 15 show that place strategy has a mean value of 3.73 and a standard deviation of 0.39. This shows that the respondents are more or less in agreement on the effectiveness of distribution practices. Moderate variation however indicates variation in access to markets and efficiency in distribution among Women Self-Help Groups.

Interpretation

The findings reveal that there is a moderate positive correlation between place strategy and marketing efficiency. An effective channel of distribution improves availability and market penetration, enhancing the sales performance and the overall marketing of WSHGs.

4.6 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

The research based on the use of SmartPLS as the Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) model to investigate the links between marketing mix strategies (Product, Price, Promotion, Place) and marketing efficiency of WSHGs. PLS-SEM can be used because it can work with more complicated models and comparatively small samples.

4.6.1 Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model is assessed using:

- Indicator reliability
- Internal consistency reliability
- Convergent validity
- Discriminant validity

4.6.1.1 Indicator Reliability

The loading of all the items was higher than the recommended level of 0.70, which represents sufficient indicator reliability. Items whose loadings were 0.60-0.70 were not dropped since they contributed to content validity.

4.6.1.2 Internal Consistency Reliability & Convergent Validity

Table 16. Reliability Statistics

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE	Composite Reliability (CR)
Product	0.71	0.65	0.74
Price	0.73	0.63	0.75
Promotion	0.72	0.62	0.73
Place	0.70	0.66	0.72
Marketing Efficiency	0.75	0.68	0.77

Every value is above the value of 0.70 so, internal consistency is assured. All of the AVE values are greater than 0.50, which means that constructs clarify over a half of the variance in their indicators.

4.6.1.3 Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

The Fornell-Larcker criterion validates that the square root of AVE values is greater than the inter-construct correlations for all constructs, which is indicative of discriminant validity. This means that each construct is independent from each other and measures a different aspect of the construct. Based on this measurement model, it can be seen that the measurement model has good discriminant validity and reliability for the purpose of further analysis of the structural model.

Table 17. Discriminant Validity

Constructs	Product	Price	Promotion	Place	Marketing Efficiency
Product	0.81				
Price	0.43	0.79			
Promotion	0.36	0.38	0.78		
Place	0.26	0.29	0.40	0.81	
Marketing Efficiency	0.39	0.42	0.53	0.45	0.82

Diagonal values are square root of AVE. Diagonal values are more than inter-construct correlations, which proves discriminant validity.

4.6.2 Structural Model Evaluation

The results of the structural model indicate that promotion and price have significant influence on marketing efficiency, whereas product strategy is insignificant. The most effective means of promotion is the most effective. The model shows an acceptable level of fit ($SRMR = 0.065$; $NFI = 0.91$) and explain 52% variance in the marketing efficiency, and this model has a good predictive level. The measures used to evaluate the structural model are: Path coefficients (β), t-values (bootstrapping), R^2 values, Effect size (f^2)

Table 18. Structural Model Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	Product $\rightarrow$ Marketing Efficiency	0.087	1.625	0.105	Not Supported
H2	Price $\rightarrow$ Marketing Efficiency	0.298	4.029	0.000	Supported
H3	Promotion $\rightarrow$ Marketing Efficiency	0.428	9.147	0.000	Supported
H4	Place $\rightarrow$ Marketing Efficiency	0.176	4.053	0.000	Supported

The most influential one is the promotion ($\beta = 0.428$), which demonstrates the significance of the awareness and communication. The price ($\beta = 0.298$) has a significant influence on the efficiency as it considers the affordability. Place ($\beta = 0.176$) has a positive value, which shows the contribution of distribution channels. Product ($\beta = 0.087$) is not significant, indicating a small degree of differentiation.

Table 19. R^2 Value

Endogenous Variable	R^2
Marketing Efficiency	0.52

The model has explained a moderate to substantial percentage of 52% of the variance.

Table 20. Effect Size

Variable	f^2 Value	Effect Size
Product	0.01	Small
Price	0.12	Medium
Promotion	0.28	Large
Place	0.08	Small

Their importance has been confirmed by the large impact of promotion and moderate impact of price.

Table 21. Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Value	Threshold
SRMR	0.065	< 0.08
NFI	0.91	> 0.90

The model has good fit, as the recommended thresholds are met. Measurement model is good and valid. There is a high predictive power of structural model. The most important driver is promotion. Product does not have a significant impact.

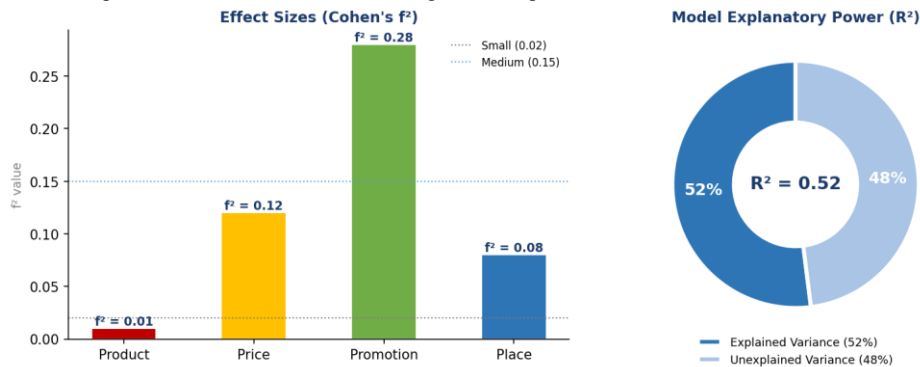


Figure 11. Marketing Mix Effect Size Analysis

Figure 11 analysis shows Promotion has the strongest influence ($f^2 = 0.28$), followed by Price (0.12) and Place (0.08), while Product exhibits minimal effect (0.01). The model explains 52% variance ($R^2 = 0.52$), indicating moderate-to-strong explanatory power and reliable predictive capability overall.

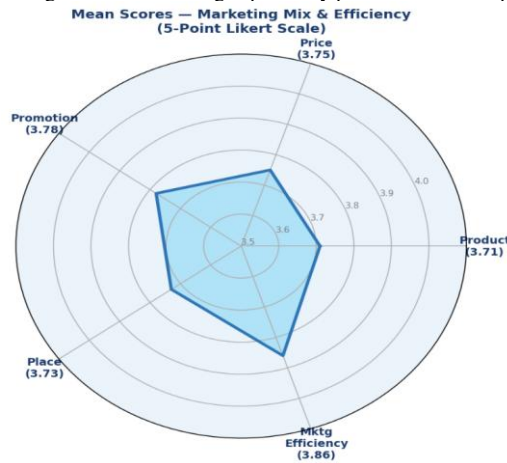


Figure 12. Marketing Efficiency Mean Score Analysis

Figure 12 shows that the mean scores were balanced on the marketing mix dimensions and marketing efficiency. The highest mean scores were found for Promotion (3.78), Price (3.75) and Place (3.73), and Product (3.71). The respondents gave the highest overall perception for marketing efficiency with mean score of 3.86.

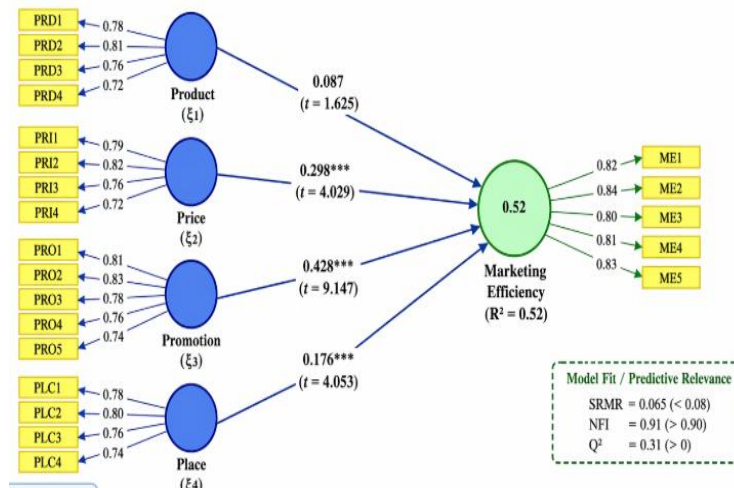


Figure 13. SmartPLS Structural Model

The figure 13 presents a structural equation model showing the impact of marketing mix elements on marketing efficiency. Promotion has the strongest influence, followed by price and place, all statistically significant. Product shows a weak and non-significant effect. The model explains 52% variance in marketing efficiency. Measurement indicators demonstrate strong loadings, and model fit indices confirm good predictive relevance and reliability.

5 Discussion

The results of this research give great empirical support that marketing mix strategies are critical in improving the marketing effectiveness of WSHGs with particular differences in the intensity of influence on individual elements. Promotion is the most dominant predictor of four dimensions, meaning that the creation of awareness, communication and trust-building tools, including word-of-mouth and local interaction are core to enhancing market performance in rural and semi-urban settings. Price also presents a strong positive impact, indicating relevance of affordability and value-based price policies in capturing price-sensitive consumers, which is consistent with the economic realities of target markets that are served by WSHGs. In the same way, place (distribution) also plays a major

role in marketing efficiency since it provides the accessibility and availability of products by having local markets, direct selling, and new digital platforms, which increase the market reach. Conversely, the product dimension does not show a strong impact, which indicates that although of satisfactory quality, WSHGs might fail to have a differentiation, innovation, or branding strategy that can result in a robust competitive advantage. Theoretically, these findings support the relevance of the marketing mix framework and the Resource-Based View, where it is important to leverage internal resources, including local knowledge and social capital, and Social Entrepreneurship Theory, which points to the significance of trust and community orientation in fueling the outcomes. In general, the research highlights the importance of strategic change to focus on production-oriented to market-oriented strategies, and it is more important to focus on effective promotion, competitive prices, and effective distribution than on product features to ensure that marketing success and sustainability of WSHGs.

Table 22. Key Findings Synthesis

Factor	Statistical Result	Business Interpretation	Priority
Promotion (H3)	$\beta = 0.428$ Large Effect	Strongest driver. Word-of-mouth, community engagement, and local exhibitions significantly increase market penetration and customer loyalty. Digital promotional adoption remains nascent but high-potential.	PRIORITY ACTION
Price (H2)	$\beta = 0.298$ Medium Effect	Competitive and affordable pricing is critical in price-sensitive rural markets. Cost-efficient production and direct-to-consumer models enable WSHGs to undercut intermediary-inflated prices.	HIGH IMPACT
Place (H4)	$\beta = 0.176$ Significant	Local market access and direct selling networks improve product availability. Expansion to digital/e-commerce platforms and market linkage programmes offer scalable growth pathways.	GROWTH LEVER
Product (H1)	$\beta = 0.087$ Not Sig.	Product quality alone is insufficient without differentiation, branding, or innovation. The absence of significant product impact points to a critical gap in product development strategy.	STRATEGIC GAP

6 Implications and Contributions

The research has some useful theoretical, managerial, and policy implications and has significant contributions to the current body of knowledge on WSHGs. Theoretically, it applies marketing mix (4Ps) model to the context of informal and women-led business and mingles it with resource-based and social entrepreneurship viewpoints, thus adding to the knowledge of marketing efficiency in informal and rural environments. Empirically, it adds region-specific data in the form of Thiruvallur District, which fills an important gap in the previous research that has mostly ignored marketing efficiency as a specific result variable. Managerially, the results indicate that WSHGs must consider promotion, pricing, and distribution strategies more than focusing on the product itself and that better branding, adoption of digital marketing, and practices of engaging their customers are required to achieve greater competitiveness. The research indicates that promotion, pricing, and distribution are more important than product strategy in improving marketing effectiveness of WSHG. Policy wise, the research points to the fact that the government and development agencies need to develop specific capacity-building initiatives, such as marketing skills and e-commerce platforms training, and market linkage support, to increase the sustainability of SHGs. The findings provide actionable information that can be taken by the policymakers, practitioners, and SHGs in adopting market-oriented approaches to sustainable growth. Altogether, the research has its value in providing practitioners and policymakers with specific actionable tips and developing the theoretical field of the marketing strategy in relation to micro-enterprises led by women.

7 Conclusion and Limitation

The research illustrates that the marketing effectiveness of WSHGs in Thiruvallur District is largely determined by how they strategically apply the marketing mix components, and promotion, price, and place are the most influential ones. The most significant variable that influences the marketing efficiency among the WSHGs is that of promotion. The findings have shown that the proper promotional efforts, especially focusing on the promotion of awareness and building trust, are central to increasing market penetration and customer interaction, whereas proper pricing strategies make sure that markets that are price-sensitive are affordable and competitive. Accessibility is further enhanced by efficient distribution channels that allow WSHGs to extend their reach beyond the local boundaries. Non-significant effect of product strategy, however, also indicates that there is a critical gap in product differentiation, innovation and branding that product development cannot be effectively applied to the marketing success without the supportive strategies that are market-oriented. The results support the significance of matching the internal resources with the external market requirements as highlighted by the marketing mix paradigm and the resource-based views. To ensure long term sustainability a change in the production-oriented to market-oriented strategies is necessary. In general, the study finds that a change in the production-focused strategy to a holistic, market-oriented strategy should be the key to enhancing the sustainability and performance of WSHGs. Enhancing marketing effectiveness through increased promotional capacity, the application of a competitive price and an improved distribution network together with specific training and policy assistance can go a long way in ensuring that women in SHGs are empowered economically in the long term.

Conflict of Interest: All authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval : Informed consent has been obtained from all the women SHG members included in this study.

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